

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace paragraphs [0009] and [0010] with the following amended paragraphs [0009] and [0010]. Please delete paragraphs [0011] and [0012].

[0009] In one aspect, the present invention is directed to a ~~blood-collection~~ needle protector for use with a needle assembly that includes a ~~needle-and-hub~~ piercing end, a hub, and a blood-collection plastic tube attached to the hub. The blood-collection needle protector includes a unitary body including ~~first distal~~ and ~~second proximal~~ open ends. The needle protector further includes a plurality of side walls extending between the ~~first distal~~ and ~~second proximal~~ open ends, the side walls defining an interior chamber within the body. The ~~first distal~~ open end of the needle protector is adapted to receive the hub of the needle assembly. The proximal open end has an end wall defining an aperture that is adapted so that the hub cannot pass through the proximal open end. The aperture is a multiple profile window in which the first profile is adapted to allow the tubing to slide through and the second profile is adapted to retain or hold the tubing. The aperture is completely enclosed by the end wall so that the tubing is contained within the aperture. One of the side walls includes a flexible retaining member adapted for contacting the hub so that when the hub is in the fully retracted position the piercing end is completely contained within the interior chamber. The needle protector also includes a side wall that defines ~~a slot to allow viewing of the interior chamber of the needle protector~~ an internal groove extending from the distal open end to the proximal open end.

[0010] In another aspect, the present invention is directed to a ~~blood-collection~~ needle protector assembly that includes ~~the above-described needle protector and a~~

needle assembly that includes a needle, a hub and a blood collection tube attached to the hub. The needle assembly includes a piercing end attached to a hub and a length of tubing attached to the opposite end of the hub. The body of the hub and further includes a outwardly extending rib. The needle protector assembly includes a body including distal and proximal open ends. The needle protector further includes a plurality of side walls extending between the distal and proximal open ends, the side walls defining an interior chamber within the body. The distal open end of the needle protector assembly is adapted to receive the hub of the needle assembly. One of the side walls includes a flexible retaining member adapted for contacting the hub so that when the hub is in the fully retracted position the piercing end is completely contained within the interior chamber. The needle protector assembly also includes a side wall that defines an internal groove extending from the distal open end to the proximal open end. The proximal open end has an end wall defining an aperture that is adapted so that the hub cannot pass through the proximal open end. The aperture is a multiple profile window in which the first profile is adapted to allow the tubing to slide through and the second profile is adapted to retain or hold the tubing. The aperture is completely enclosed by the end wall so that the tubing is contained within the aperture.